

What is claimed is:

1. An airbag module for protecting a pedestrian comprising:  
an airbag inflator;  
a vehicle hood airbag in communication with said airbag inflator;  
wherein said vehicle hood airbag is oriented to deploy at an acute  
angle to a vehicle hood; and  
wherein said vehicle hood airbag has an airbag length and an airbag  
width, said airbag length sized to extend only substantially along a vehicle  
hood length and said airbag width sized to extend substantially across a  
vehicle hood width.
2. The airbag module of Claim 1 wherein said vehicle hood airbag is  
deployable from a location in forward of the vehicle hood.
3. The airbag module of Claim 2 wherein said vehicle hood airbag is  
deployable to extend from the location in forward of the vehicle hood to a rear  
area of the vehicle hood.
4. The airbag module of Claim 3 wherein said vehicle hood airbag  
covers substantially the entire vehicle hood when deployed.
5. The airbag module of Claim 1 wherein said airbag inflator stores a  
pressurized inflation gas.
6. The airbag module of Claim 1 including a vehicle storage  
compartment housing said airbag inflator and said vehicle hood airbag.
7. The airbag module of Claim 6 wherein said vehicle storage  
compartment comprises a door hinged to said vehicle storage compartment,  
said door having a first position when said vehicle hood airbag is deployed  
and a second position when said vehicle hood airbag is not deployed.

8. The airbag module of Claim 7 wherein said door comprises an outer skin of a vehicle.

9. The airbag module of Claim 1 wherein said airbag length is about the same as said vehicle hood length.

10. A vehicle hood airbag module, comprising:  
an airbag inflator storing a pressurized inflation gas;  
a vehicle hood airbag in communication with said airbag inflator;  
a vehicle storage compartment housing said airbag inflator and said airbag;

a door hinged to said vehicle hood storage compartment, said door having a first position when said airbag is deployed and a second position when said airbag is not deployed wherein said door comprises an outer skin of a front area of a vehicle in said second position; and

said airbag has an airbag length and an airbag width, said airbag length sized to extend only substantially along a vehicle hood length and said airbag width sized to extend substantially across a vehicle hood width.

11. The airbag module of Claim 10 wherein said vehicle hood airbag is deployable from a front area of a vehicle hood at an acute angle to the vehicle hood.

12. The airbag module of Claim 11 wherein said vehicle hood airbag is deployable to extend from the front area of a vehicle hood to a rear area of the vehicle hood.

13. The airbag module of Claim 12 wherein said vehicle hood airbag covers the entire vehicle hood when deployed.

14. The airbag module of Claim 10 wherein said airbag length is substantially the same as said vehicle hood length.

15. A method of airbag maintenance, comprising the steps of:  
compacting a deployed vehicle hood airbag;  
removing a discharged inflator cartridge; and  
replacing the discharged inflator cartridge with a pressurized inflator cartridge.